

# THE INQUIRER

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AND FREE RELIGIOUS FELLOWSHIP

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## WORSHIP—A “SHOULD” OR A “MUST”?

### “GOD SAYS ‘KEEP MY SABBATHS’—ARE YOU OBSERVING SUNDAY?”

Many churches in this country have recently been displaying that poster. They are not churches of the liberal faith, but they could be almost any other church; so much so that in the eyes of the unchurched 80% of the population the approach is typical of organized religion.

“You should go to church—God says so”. Liberal churches are not likely to adopt that type of publicity. For one thing, it makes what is (even for an authoritarian church) the elementary publicity blunder of appealing to an authority which is not recognized by the people it is appealing to. For another, the principle of authority implied is alien to the liberal tradition.

But has religious liberalism ever examined its own notions of “worship” to discover whether they are clear of any suspicion of “authoritarianism”?

#### The “Authoritarian” Approach

Time and tradition, for example, have made inseparable the notions of “worshipping” and “bowing down”. “Bending the knee” and “paying homage” are generally regarded as the essential features of “worship”, since “God” is generally regarded as a Person capable of being pleased with adoration and thanks to Him. The glorious robes of the priest are meant to do honour to the Heavenly Guest on the altar, likewise the incense, the music and the candles. Prayers are offered to him to “intercede” or interfere with the natural order of events, for example to send rain or to stop it. That notion of worship is all of a piece with the notion of a supernatural personal God, with the notion that Sunday must be observed because that God says so.

#### The Dilemma

Liberal religion has not thoroughly worked out its own notion of worship in relation to this complex of ideas, and decided whether it can dismiss part of the complex and retain the rest.

It may be that when it does it will have to make a clean sweep of the whole complex and find another reason for, and notion of, worship. If God is not a supernatural God who can suspend the processes of nature at the request of his supplicants, then worship cannot be “aimed” at Him in the usual sense. In that case, we must boldly declare that what goes on in a liberal church is not what the rest of the world knows as “worship”, and that what-

ever we are doing is not aimed at God but at Man, in particular the men and women in the church. Indeed, the hymns, the music, the prayers, and readings are usually chosen most carefully to produce the maximum effect on the worshipper. Our publicity would, therefore, have to read, “Come and enjoy the psychological effect of our services”.

If then we must choose between “Worship because God says so” and “Worship because it’s good psychology”, religious liberalism is in a real dilemma.

#### An Alternative

But there is another way of looking at worship. It can be seen as a united act of devotion, meditation and singing, wherein one is doing something for one’s fellows as well as oneself, an act wherein one realizes with them a dimension of existence that is not normally attained in isolation, and even then only by rare individuals. The basic reason for worship must be a human one, namely that human creatures need each other, not only at the physical, economic and cultural levels that give rise to life in community, but still more so at the spiritual level, that is, at the level where ultimate things matter, such as the meaning of life, one’s place in it, the facing of its crises of sorrow and joy. We are “members one of another” not only physically, economically and culturally, but also spiritually, and we cannot survive at any of these levels in isolation from each other.

Such an approach is human insofar as the effects of it are on humans here and now, but it is divine in the sense that it opens up new mysteries, vistas and sources of strength. It gives man what Santayana calls “another world to live in”.

Worship is then another human art-form, a conscious attempt by man in fellowship to see and experience his life under its largest possible dimension. Just as poetry can be seen as “emotion recollected in tranquillity” so worship can be seen as “life itself recollected in tranquillity”, an attempt to make sense of the separate experiences of life, to see them in focus and proportion. For even a painter working most of the time closely at his canvas, without seeing the effect of the whole, has to stand back now and then to see what the whole is amounting to and where his next separate brush-strokes must be put.

#### An Overhead Observer?

If our worship did give that “viewing-distance”.

there would be no more empty pews in liberal churches. But may it not be that though our worship tries to do that it continually fails because its forms and phrases do not speak in living tones to this generation? Does every word in our orders of worship speak to the mid-20th century in that voice? If not, why not?

When we have overhauled all our forms of worship with this in mind, we, at any rate, will have no need to tell people they *should* go to church, they will come not because they "should" but because they "must".

[CONTRIBUTED]

## HARRIET MARTINEAU

By E. G. Lee

IN 1830 "The Central Unitarian Association" offered three prizes for three essays. They were to be on the best manner by which Unitarianism could be presented to Catholics, Jews and Mohammedans. Three impressive judging committees were appointed with different representatives on each. The Association was evidently in earnest. A prize of ten guineas was offered for the winning essay to convert the Catholics, one of fifteen guineas for the Jews and twenty for the Mohammedans. The result of the first competition—that on the essay for the Catholics—was announced in October. The winner was Miss Harriet Martineau, aged twenty-seven, living in Norwich, a daughter of the well-known Unitarian family in that city. Her success was announced in the *Monthly Repository*, a forerunner of *The Inquirer*.

The paper evidently reached Norwich on Sunday, for on the next day Miss Martineau went to the public library to borrow the Koran, with the intention of writing an essay for the Mohammedans. This she did in five weeks, presumably having read through the Koran as well. Having managed this she then set out to tackle a work for the Jews. This also she did in excellent time. The title she gave to the work intended for the Mohammedans was, "The Faith as Unfolded by Many Prophets", and she based her Jewish essay on a work by the German philosopher, Lessing, bearing the title, "Hundred Thoughts on the Education of the Human Race". At the end of all this labour (Miss Martineau used to work all day at genteel needle-work, and wrote at night until two o'clock in the morning, being up for breakfast at eight), she was very thin and dreamt nightly about the destruction of Jerusalem. She went away to Kent for a holiday, but came in May to the "May Meeting" of the Unitarians in London. She knew she had won the other two prizes also, and that the announcement was to be made at the evening meeting of the Association. It was; and Harriet was a somewhat distressed member of the audience because of her triumph.

She was now twenty-eight, and she was not only thin but pale, plain, in bad health and deaf. Later she was to think little of winning these prizes, for as she says in her autobiography in them she "had plunged into the spirit of my time—that of self-analysis, pathetic self-pity, typical interpretation of objective matters, and scheme-making in the name of God and man".

Evidently the "mixed-up kids" are dated by something like a century and a half by the spirit of Harriet's time.

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The life of this remarkable woman is excellently told in *The Life And Work of Harriet Martineau*, by Vera Wheatley (Secker and Warburg, 35s.). At the age of 27, through the failure of the business which kept her and her family—her father then dead, she was left literally without one shilling in her pocket. She determined to earn her living by writing, and by her thirties she was a great success and friends with many of the literary figures in London, including Thomas Carlyle. The success did not come easy. Vera Wheatley gives the moving and courageous details of it.

Harriet, of course, was the sister of James Martineau. In their youth they were great friends. On one holiday they walked 500 miles in Scotland in a month. Later they had their quarrel. At the age of thirty-six Harriet took to her bed and had to stay there for nearly six years. She thought she was there for good. But hypnosis cured her. (Or

helped her to be cured.) She recovered excellent health again and continued her mighty literary labours. But James thought little of her cure and wrote scathingly of hypnosis. This Vera Wheatley describes as the only "mean-spirited act of his life". Later they were to become permanently estranged over what he thought to be Harriet's atheistical opinions. But, again according to the author, "To an unprejudiced observer, the only difference—with one signal exception—between the religious tenets of James and Harriet was that the one spoke of God and the other a First Cause".

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There were probably other differences, much deeper, and founded in affection. Vera Wheatley has a great admiration for James. She calls him an "eagle" and a "saintly man". He was; but she applies another word not used by Unitarians about him, "haunted". And one only has to look at the portrait of Watts of him to see how true this is. Harriet was not "haunted", everything was clear and brave for her. Her portrait, painted at 48, shows here to be a serene and self-conquered woman. Religion for her was social reform, good works and uncompromising truth. Religion for James was not that, in that way. It was a much more complicated matter. It was comprehensive and penetrating. It did not necessarily lead to action but to a state of the soul. No wonder, being a Unitarian, he was "haunted". Perhaps it is not too far-fetched to find that the differences between James and Harriet to be the permanent differences within the Unitarian movement unresolved to this day, and sometimes unrecognized.

Vera Wheatley has disinterred a great woman from the tomb of Victorian isolation, and Unitarians can read the book with great interest and some pride. In her interpretation of Harriet she has given a hint of what may be done someday for those giants of the Unitarian movement of the nineteenth century. Most of them are buried in the tombs of psychological neglect. Their greatness and depth as men and women are still unknown. They are, even for contemporary Unitarians, mostly period pieces. And they are not that. It is not inconceivable that a revival of Unitarianism may very well come when, in the manner of Vera Wheatley, the greatness of nineteenth-century Unitarianism is rescued in the greatness of a few great ones.

## FROM MY JOURNAL

By "Stephelin"

I WISH Stephelin would keep its troubles to itself. I met their chairman in the town to-day and he said the committee thought they had made a mistake in inviting so young a man as John Earnest to be their minister. "We should have had an older man who would have attracted outsiders by his preaching", he told me. I am afraid I gave him a piece of my mind. I asked him why Stephelin and many chapels like it couldn't choose the man best suited to minister to their own personal religious needs, instead of trying to choose someone who is supposed to suit and attract a congregation that doesn't exist.

Mr. K., our new schoolmaster convert, has a good mind and I enjoy talking over with him the implications of his newfound faith. To-night he revealed in the freedom which Unitarianism allows him in his thought of God. We ended up in a realm of negative abstraction which philosophically satisfied us both. He then dozed himself in his armchair and

inquired whether I minded him asking a rather straight question. "How can you talk as you have to me to-night," he asked, "and on Sundays speak of God as Father?" I reminded him that even abstract negatives are only symbols for the fact of God. Father, Lord, and whatever terms I use in the pulpit for God, are also, only symbols. I use the symbols for God which are appropriate to my hearers, and I suggested he ought to accustom himself to hearing and using the simpler ones without criticism, knowing that he can when he wishes substitute those of his own choice.

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Everyone seems to have been delighted to see our chapel for once full with the annual meeting of the District Association. I felt our usual quiet spirit of devotion was far away. Hymn-sheets fluttered. As far on as the end of the first lesson pews were squeezing up to admit late-comers. Our organist went in for a new voluntary a little above his capacity and the clicking of coins during the collection seemed endless. Added to which a section in the side aisle clamoured that they had been missed just as the Sidesmen had formed up for their march to the front. The minute the preacher had finished his sermon our ladies scuttled out of their seats to take up their places behind the urns, and the Benediction had hardly died away before hands were being shaken over the pews as church met church. It was a great occasion... but for worship? I wish we depended less upon the consolation of numbers.

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There are people who like flowers, people who love flowers and people who identify their whole being with the life of the glowing petal. To these last belongs our dear Miss Y. Our church flowers go first to the sick, and if none are laid aside, then by some complicated rota I do not understand they are given to the members of the congregation who have no gardens. To-night was Miss Y.'s turn. I was standing on the chapel steps welcoming a Welsh girl who has come to work as a health visitor. Looking around to find someone to whom to introduce her, I saw Miss Y. coming out with her flowers. They went off together down the chapel path and I heard Miss Y. say, in her deep voice, "Mind you come and sit with me next Sunday." With that she thrust her precious flowers into the arms of the astonished Welsh girl and plunged across the zebra crossing. I was sorry there were no eyes but mine to look upon the love that is beyond generosity.

## HOW WARM IS OUR WELCOME?

A correspondent writes:

Cold Saturday nights are already arriving before our chapel heating systems have been started, and catching the thermometers in the chapels slipping down into the lower 50's. When they are at last started, it might be interesting to make a survey of what temperatures are regarded by Unitarian committees up and down the country as the minimum compatible with comfort. The standard practice adopted by architects and engineers in this country for public halls, assembly rooms and churches is a minimum of 60 F. But at least one successful cinema chain gives its patrons 67-68 F. The preferences of our transatlantic Unitarians for the upper 60's and even the lower 70's may not be to our liking. We pride ourselves on our hardiness. They, however, can pride themselves on their crowded churches. We are, of course, a body as well as spirit and spiritual warmth and fervour are not entirely independent of the physical temperatures in which they occur. Worshipping in gloves and top-coat may not therefore be part of the natural order. Adequate heating may be quite out of the question for some churches in view of their antiquated machinery and perilous financial condition. But may not this be due partly to their spartan standards, and the consequent vicious circle of cold churches leading to fewer worshippers, leading to smaller budgets, leading to colder churches still?

## NEGROPHOBIA

By Geoffrey W. Potts

**D**URING World War II a young Negro girl in the Southern States of America was asked how she would punish Hitler. She replied: "Paint him black and bring him over here". This remark suggests that Rudyard Kipling was speaking the truth when he said: "It is not good to be a Negro in the land of the free and the home of the brave". The recent events in Arkansas are but another reminder of this unpleasant fact. In spite of the Federal Government's attempts to establish racial integration by law, the South maintains its policy of discrimination between the colours.

In practice this policy involves separation on all levels, analogous to the old caste system of India—with the Negroes as the untouchables. Not only must there be two sets of schools, mental hospitals, penitentiaries, churches (except Roman Catholic into which Negroes are at least admitted, if not made welcome) but there are strictures which forbid the intermarriage, the eating, drinking, travelling, playing and talking together of black and white. That some contact on a certain level is made, however, manifests itself in the striking fact that out of the thirteen million or so Negroes in America as a whole, roughly six million are mulattoes—children of mixed parentage. Approximately ten of the thirteen million live in the South.

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The solution to the problem facing the Southern States goes beyond their acceptance of Federal legislation regarding racial integration, for to most Southern Whites segregation is a concept bred in them. It has existed since the first Negroes arrived in Jamestown in 1619, and slavery was simply its first outward form. The Civil War, or more correctly, the War Between the States, and its aftermath in particular, is said to be responsible for the present disposition of most Southern Whites towards their Negro counterparts.

The war, which was fought from the Confederate point of view to retain its life of "leisure, grace and gallantry"—dependent upon slavery—resulted in a great devastation and impoverishment of the Southern States. But the peace that followed was even worse than the war. Besides having to watch their lands plundered and burned by victory-drunk Union forces, the Southerners were subjected to a calculated and systematic process of humiliation in which the only things left to them, their honour and pride, were shattered.

The Union army of occupation, in the name of democracy, insisted that elections be held, and while all who had been associated with the Confederate cause were disfranchised, meaning practically all Southern Whites, the poor, illiterate, ignorant Negroes were made to vote. The result: a "democratic" government composed of irresponsible Negroes, rogues, self-seekers and party-men. By the time the Southern States were re-admitted into the Union, 1868-1877, the concept of democracy had become associated with lawlessness, corruption and humiliation. For the Negro, hopes of future social and economic justice had been destroyed. It was a case for the Southern Whites of seeing to it that their experience of humiliation never recurred.

That intention remains still. The South has an inbred fear of what will happen if the Negroes are not kept in their place. Consequently, immediate suspicion is aroused by any endeavour to better the Negroes' position, and so great is the fear that violence and the threat of violence is always to hand.

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In the light of this it seems improbable that any attempt to reason with the Southern Whites will be successful, for the fears they have are deeply rooted in their emotional character. Even so, it is obvious that the Negro problem (or is it a White problem?) will have to be resolved, otherwise American democracy itself will be in serious jeopardy. One can only hope and pray that the improvements which have taken place in the relations between the colours, will continue, and that

the Arkansas episodes are not indicative of a permanent deterioration in the state of affairs.

It is not too much to be hoped for that those lines from the sonnet inscribed on the Statue of Liberty will in time be taken to heart by the "deep" South:

"Give me your tired, your poor,  
Your huddled masses yearning to be free,  
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore.  
Send these the homeless, tempest-tossed to me.  
I hold the lamp before the golden door."

## COMMENT

### Necessity or Mass-Suggestion?

VERY soon the man who is bold enough to saunter along the promenade without dark glasses can consider himself an "outsider". I used to imagine that the reason why such glasses were worn was the brightness of the sun at holiday resorts, but I have read that the man who does not wear shaded glasses is not in a position to enjoy the real beauty of nature, for such glasses can filter out the less pleasing shades of colour and let us see that nature has charms that would otherwise escape us. My own feeling is that this is simply one of the modern fads that add to the turnover of commercial concerns. Not so many years ago, no one wore shaded glasses whose eyes were not in need of some treatment, and no one came home from a holiday the worse without them. Part of the technique of modern salesmanship is to make one discontented with what one has, or else to imagine needs where none exist; and in the carefree atmosphere of a summer holiday there is ample field for its application.

### Passing the Customs

A year or two ago I brought a small clock for one of my family, and I was annoyed at having to pay about thirty shillings customs duty on it. I had hoped to be able to get off by saying, on being interrogated, that I only had a few small presents with me, but I was asked deliberately, "Have you any cameras, watches or clocks?" and when I saw suitcases being opened and searched all around me, it wasn't only the voice of conscience that made me confess the sad truth. This year I took care to choose for presents things of which the customs was not specially anxious to know, and I said with truth that I had some small presents of a total value of £2 10s. "Let me see your passport." It was produced, and when the man saw that I was a minister, he realized, no doubt, that I couldn't be expected to have very much more, and I passed on without further trouble. By the way, did you ever hear the story of a little girl who was passing the customs along with her mother. The officer was probing into the depths of a trunk, the little girl looking on anxiously. At last she called out in her excitement: "My word, he was hot then, wasn't he, Mum?"

### The Scientific Conscience

The presidential address of Professor P. S. M. Blackett to this year's meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Trinity College, Dublin, was remarkable for the ethical note he struck, that advancement in technology incurred a corresponding moral duty to bring its advantages within the reach of under-developed nations. Technological development everywhere involves a huge capital expenditure, amounting to between £1,000 and £10,000 per man employed in the new plant, and the 1,000 m. people in non-Communist countries must be helped by the 400 m. if those outside the benefits that are potentially within the gift of modern technology are to have their standards of living effectively raised. A billion pounds a year applied for this purpose would be effective, and it would mean the application of only 1 per cent of the income of the more favoured regions. Britain, no doubt, contributes the £150 m. involved in this suggestion, or a good part of it, in the ordinary way of investment, but Professor Blackett suggests a further £150 m. to be given as a gift, and his reasons certainly are compelling.

### The Unitarian Register

With the most recent number to hand of the journal of the American Unitarian Association, the *Christian Register* makes its first appearance, not without some opposition, as the *Unitarian Register*. It is hoped that the new name will prove more effective than the old in carrying the Unitarian message to great numbers of people now outside all churches who may find a religious home in the Unitarian fellowship. In a leading article, the story is told of a very prominent Unitarian business man who, as a boy in New York, had formed the habit of going to the public library and reading many of the religious journals on the tables in the periodical room. Only one of them presented a point of view that seemed to "make sense", and that was the *Christian Register*. But it was not until twenty years later that he discovered by accident that the journal was the organ of a definite church of which he himself could become a member. I hope that the experiment will be successful, and that this excellent paper will be able to carry its message in quarters that have hitherto been prejudiced against organized religion.

## TOWARDS A UNITARIAN THEOLOGY—I.

By Bruce Findlow

IF that statement of faith for which we hear intermittent cries in every generation is meant to be a convenient summary of what Unitarians believe, its larger parent must be a Unitarian theology, taking theology to mean a methodical arrangement of the truths of religion. The word theology repels many people these days as old-fashioned or standing for something we no longer need; but the dictionary defines it as the "science of religion". It certainly implies method, order and coherence in the realm of religious beliefs and we should be the last to look down upon such things.

In practice a Unitarian theology means one of two things: either the theology of one individual Unitarian, or a theology which, it is claimed, Unitarians generally hold in common. In another kind of church it is reasonable to expect these two things to be much the same, but with us the variety of personal theologies is so great that any common theology usually seems an impossibility, no matter how desirable it might be for reasons of denominational strength and harmony. When someone does attempt a common Unitarian theology, it is usually either the simple universalization of a particular set of beliefs; or the compromise achieved by a small group of willing or representative minds; or the insistent claim of some part of the Unitarian world which believes (always falsely as it happens) that it represents the whole body.

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The difficulty about trying to work from the varied multitude of personal Unitarian theologies towards a common and acceptable statement of faith or full theology is that the personal theologies are usually fragmentary and self-contradictory as well as in conflict with one another, and so the task is the fruitless one of trying to make a coherent whole out of incoherent parts. We have not yet discovered the right method for setting down a Unitarian theology which will be representative of our movement in our generation and the argument behind these articles is that our first need is to explore that problem before trying to construct a truly representative statement. There is room for what might be called an "intellectual mission to ourselves" before we try to speak with one voice to tell the world what our faith is now.

These matters which seem relevant to this preliminary inquiry will be considered here, not with any claim to finality but in an experimental mood, searching the ground for the right road towards a Unitarian theology. First, who are the Unitarians? Second, to what authority do we appeal in judging theological matters? And third, what is the framework of practice, the actual situation, in which we make our theology?

Who are the Unitarians today? The common view is that they are, visibly, those who worship in—or at least belong to—Unitarian churches; and, invisibly, an unknown number of other people who are "Unitarians without knowing it". But this view will not do for a discussion of our theology unless it be negative theology or lack of theology, for the binding factor for these two groups of people is their common rejection of some Christian teachings and practices. The invisible Unitarians probably make this rejection by personal thought and decision, but this cannot be said to be true of all the visible Unitarians in our churches. Some of these inherit a negative theology, or a lack of theology, from their parents or grandparents; others accept it as the teaching of the particular church in which, for some non-theological reason, they happen to find themselves. Inasmuch as the authority for their rejections is inward rather than external, the invisible Unitarians may have a better title to the name than some of us have.

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But rejections are not enough.

I take the real Unitarian to be the person who finds some sort of positive religious faith partly at least by his own endeavour and partly at least by the use of his own reason. On this view the Unitarian is a person with a positive desire for a religious faith and with some capacity for thought and reflection. He doesn't have to be articulate, but he does have to be able to come to conclusions of a religious kind for himself in the light of the evidence known to him. These two characteristics, religious desire and mental capacity, are not jointly present in everybody and so our appeal is to some people in particular rather than to humanity in general. We may regret that we have not an answer for every man and that many people do not seem to have an active desire for a religious faith today, but I think we have to leave it to cruder and more dogmatic churches to re-awaken that desire, and ourselves devote our energies to those in whom the desire is already present but unsatisfied.

Unitarians, visible and invisible, will be a minority (say, 0.5 per cent rather than 25 per cent) of thoughtful people who are conscious of needs which only a religious faith can satisfy. Thoughtfulness doesn't imply any particular kind or level of education. A Unitarian theology has to speak for them whether they are inside or outside our churches, and if it succeeds in doing that it may fail to satisfy some who share the Unitarian name but not its spirit. But a theology is not a creed, so we need not fear that there will be excommunications when or if that common theology is achieved.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## ON SIGNING A CERTIFICATE

By John Rowland

RECENTLY when I was on holiday in Devon, I met a man with a very different religious background from my own, and a conversation with him revealed what is to me perhaps the most valuable aspect of the life in the Unitarian churches. He was a Methodist local preacher; he was very interested to learn that I was a Unitarian minister. He was knowledgeable on theology; he understood a good deal about the Unitarian position, though he did not share it, but he was more than a little puzzled by the way in which a completely free church could be made to work. He asked me, for instance: "How many members have you got?" I told him that it was very difficult to say; I explained that the original trust deeds of many of our churches specified that membership—full membership, involving the right to vote for the appointment of trustees or ministers, or any other radical changes in the place—depended on a financial contribution, and that only a person who contributed a specified amount annually to the upkeep of the place was regarded as a member. I said, too, that there were people whom I regarded as members of my churches who had not agreed to pay that specified amount, though no doubt many of them did pay it, in their week-by-week contributions to the collections.

He said that he did not mean anything in the nature of financial membership; he added that in his Church there were certificates of membership, which were awarded to those who had announced that they were prepared to accept the Methodist basis of belief, the Methodist code of dogma. "Ours", I told him, "are completely free Churches. The original trust deeds simply specify that the buildings are to be used for the worship of God—without any details as to the kind of worship, the form of service, the doctrines to be accepted by minister or congregation".

My Methodist friend admitted that, in that sense, his Church was not a Free Church, that there was what one might call a basic minimum of belief which ministers and members had to accept, and that there was in consequence a kind of "signing on the dotted line" which was necessary before anyone could be awarded a membership certificate. He seemed quite surprised that there existed in this country a body of Churches which did not have anything of the sort, but which allowed for a wide variation in belief and in form of service; I fear that I horrified him a little when I said that I habitually used readings from books other than the Bible; he thought all readings in Church should be from the Bible, and preferably from the Authorized Version.

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I do not know if all Unitarian ministers would agree with me, but for me, at any rate, it is because I am allowed the freedom to say what I like in the manner that seems best to me that I value my position so much. I know, in my heart, that if I were forced to accept the limitations accepted by my Methodist friend I should feel inevitably confined and bound. I know that if I were compelled to confine what I said, week by week, to a specified body of agreed doctrine, that I should find it very difficult to produce a worth-while address.

The fact that a congregation is prepared to listen sometimes to a sermon with which it does not wholly agree provides the minister with a source of strength, since it means that he does not have to trim his sails, that he has not to say to himself: "Don't touch that subject; it's dangerous; it might upset someone". It enables him to deal with matters of the world in which we live; it enables him to talk about the colour bar or the hydrogen bomb, or threats of war. This does not mean that there are not occasions when the eternal verities must be discussed; but it means that there is room within a free church for both sides of the approach—the divine emphasis and the human emphasis, the love of God and the love of Man. It is useless trying to develop an outlook which worships the Power behind existence without realizing that that Power is also *within* existence, and if it seems that we sometimes stress one side of that question and sometimes another, that is only an appearance; the reality is that we are stressing a double message, the two sides of a coin, and that only the whole coin, with both sides, is of real and permanent value.

Disagreements on detail need not worry us. A phrase in one of the prayers at the General Assembly Service in Birmingham last April is a phrase which we should all remember: "Though we may disagree, let us not be disagreeable". As I glance back over my first five years in Sussex, I feel that, though there have, inevitably, been occasions of disagreement, there have been no moments of disagreeableness.

## RELIGION AND HUMAN NEED

By E. W. Martin

MANY people are aware of the deep connection between modern psychology and the religious impulse; and Dr. W. L. Carrington has written in *Psychology, Religion and Human Need* (Epworth Press, 30s.), what is a reliable guide for laymen, ministers, doctors and teachers who wish to endow their lives with an active Christian purpose by helping those who stand in need of it.

the Arkansas episodes are not indicative of a permanent deterioration in the state of affairs.

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VERY soon the man who is bold enough to saunter along the promenade without dark glasses can consider himself an "outsider". I used to imagine that the reason why such glasses were worn was the brightness of the sun at holiday resorts, but I have read that the man who does not wear shaded glasses is not in a position to enjoy the real beauty of nature, for such glasses can filter out the less pleasing shades of colour and let us see that nature has charms that would otherwise escape us. My own feeling is that this is simply one of the modern fads that add to the turnover of commercial concerns. Not so many years ago, no one wore shaded glasses whose eyes were not in need of some treatment, and no one came home from a holiday the worse without them. Part of the technique of modern salesmanship is to make one discontented with what one has, or else to imagine needs where none exist; and in the carefree atmosphere of a summer holiday there is ample field for its application.

### Passing the Customs

A year or two ago I brought a small clock for one of my family, and I was annoyed at having to pay about thirty shillings customs duty on it. I had hoped to be able to get off by saying, on being interrogated, that I only had a few small presents with me, but I was asked deliberately, "Have you any cameras, watches or clocks?" and when I saw suitcases being opened and searched all around me, it wasn't only the voice of conscience that made me confess the sad truth. This year I took care to choose for presents things of which the customs was not specially anxious to know, and I said with truth that I had some small presents of a total value of £2 10s. "Let me see your passport." It was produced, and when the man saw that I was a minister, he realized, no doubt, that I couldn't be expected to have very much more, and I passed on without further trouble. By the way, did you ever hear the story of a little girl who was passing the customs along with her mother. The officer was probing into the depths of a trunk, the little girl looking on anxiously. At last she called out in her excitement: "My word, he was hot then, wasn't he, Mum?"

### The Scientific Conscience

The presidential address of Professor P. S. M. Blackett to this year's meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, held at Trinity College, Dublin, was remarkable for the ethical note he struck, that advancement in technology incurred a corresponding moral duty to bring its advantages within the reach of under-developed nations. Technological development everywhere involves a huge capital expenditure, amounting to between £1,000 and £10,000 per man employed in the new plant; and the 1,000 m. people in non-Communist countries must be helped by the 400 m. if those outside the benefits that are potentially within the gift of modern technology are to have their standards of living effectively raised. A billion pounds a year applied for this purpose would be effective, and it would mean the application of only 1 per cent of the income of the more favoured regions. Britain, no doubt, contributes the £150 m. involved in this suggestion, or a good part of it, in the ordinary way of investment, but Professor Blackett suggests a further £150 m. to be given as a gift, and his reasons certainly are compelling.

### The Unitarian Register

With the most recent number to hand of the journal of the American Unitarian Association, the *Christian Register* makes its first appearance, not without some opposition, as the *Unitarian Register*. It is hoped that the new name will prove more effective than the old in carrying the Unitarian message to great numbers of people now outside all churches who may find a religious home in the Unitarian fellowship. In a leading article, the story is told of a very prominent Unitarian business man who, as a boy in New York, had formed the habit of going to the public library and reading many of the religious journals on the tables in the periodical room. Only one of them presented a point of view that seemed to "make sense", and that was the *Christian Register*. But it was not until twenty years later that he discovered by accident that the journal was the organ of a definite church of which he himself could become a member. I hope that the experiment will be successful, and that this excellent paper will be able to carry its message in quarters that have hitherto been prejudiced against organized religion.

## TOWARDS A UNITARIAN THEOLOGY—I.

By Bruce Findlow

IF that statement of faith for which we hear intermittent cries in every generation is meant to be a convenient summary of what Unitarians believe, its larger parent must be a Unitarian theology, taking theology to mean a methodical arrangement of the truths of religion. The word theology repels many people these days as old-fashioned or standing for something we no longer need; but the dictionary defines it as the "science of religion". It certainly implies method, order and coherence in the realm of religious beliefs and we should be the last to look down upon such things.

In practice a Unitarian theology means one of two things: either the theology of one individual Unitarian, or a theology which, it is claimed, Unitarians generally hold in common. In another kind of church it is reasonable to expect these two things to be much the same, but with us the variety of personal theologies is so great that any common theology usually seems an impossibility, no matter how desirable it might be for reasons of denominational strength and harmony. When someone does attempt a common Unitarian theology, it is usually either the simple universalization of a particular set of beliefs, or the compromise achieved by a small group of willing or representative minds; or the insistent claim of some part of the Unitarian world which believes (always falsely as it happens) that it represents the whole body.

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The difficulty about trying to work from the varied multitude of personal Unitarian theologies towards a common and acceptable statement of faith or full theology is that the personal theologies are usually fragmentary and self-contradictory as well as in conflict with one another, and so the task is the fruitless one of trying to make a coherent whole out of incoherent parts. We have not yet discovered the right method for setting down a Unitarian theology which will be representative of our movement in our generation and the argument behind these articles is that our first need is to explore that problem before trying to construct a truly representative statement. There is room for what might be called an "intellectual mission to ourselves" before we try to speak with one voice to tell the world what our faith is now.

Three matters which seem relevant to this preliminary inquiry will be considered here, not with any claim to finality but in an experimental mood, searching the ground for the right road towards a Unitarian theology. First, who are the Unitarians? Second, to what authority do we appeal in judging theological matters? And third, what is the framework of practice, the actual situation, in which we make our theology?

Who are the Unitarians today? The common view is that they are, visibly, those who worship in—or at least belong to—Unitarian churches; and, invisibly, an unknown number of other people who are "Unitarians without knowing it". But this view will not do for a discussion of our theology unless it be negative theology or lack of theology, for the binding factor for these two groups of people is their common rejection of some Christian teachings and practices. The invisible Unitarians probably make this rejection by personal thought and decision, but this cannot be said to be true of all the visible Unitarians in our churches. Some of these inherit a negative theology, or a lack of theology, from their parents or grandparents; others accept it as the teaching of the particular church in which, for some non-theological reason, they happen to find themselves. Inasmuch as the authority for their rejections is inward rather than external, the invisible Unitarians may have a better title to the name than some of us have.

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But rejections are not enough.

I take the real Unitarian to be the person who finds some sort of positive religious faith partly at least by his own endeavour and partly at least by the use of his own reason. On this view the Unitarian is a person with a positive desire for a religious faith and with some capacity for thought and reflection. He doesn't have to be articulate, but he does have to be able to come to conclusions of a religious kind for himself in the light of the evidence known to him. These two characteristics, religious desire and mental capacity, are not jointly present in everybody and so our appeal is to some people in particular rather than to humanity in general. We may regret that we have not an answer for every man and that many people do not seem to have an active desire for a religious faith today, but I think we have to leave it to cruder and more dogmatic churches to re-awaken that desire, and ourselves devote our energies to those in whom the desire is already present but unsatisfied.

Unitarians, visible and invisible, will be a minority (say, 0.5 per cent rather than 25 per cent) of thoughtful people who are conscious of needs which only a religious faith can satisfy. Thoughtfulness doesn't imply any particular kind or level of education. A Unitarian theology has to speak for them whether they are inside or outside our churches, and if it succeeds in doing that it may fail to satisfy some who share the Unitarian name but not its spirit. But a theology is not a creed, so we need not fear that there will be excommunications when or if that common theology is achieved.

[TO BE CONTINUED]

## ON SIGNING A CERTIFICATE

By John Rowland

RECENTLY when I was on holiday in Devon, I met a man with a very different religious background from my own, and a conversation with him revealed what is to me perhaps the most valuable aspect of the life in the Unitarian churches. He was a Methodist local preacher; he was very interested to learn that I was a Unitarian minister. He was knowledgeable on theology; he understood a good deal about the Unitarian position, though he did not share it, but he was more than a little puzzled by the way in which a completely free church could be made to work. He asked me, for instance: "How many members have you got?" I told him that it was very difficult to say. I explained that the original trust deeds of many of our churches specified that membership—full membership, involving the right to vote for the appointment of trustees or ministers, or any other radical changes in the place—depended on a financial contribution, and that only a person who contributed a specified amount annually to the upkeep of the place was regarded as a member. I said, too, that there were people whom I regarded as members of my churches who had not agreed to pay that specified amount, though no doubt many of them did pay it, in their week-by-week contributions to the collections.

He said that he did not mean anything in the nature of financial membership; he added that in his Church there were certificates of membership, which were awarded to those who had announced that they were prepared to accept the Methodist basis of belief, the Methodist code of dogma. "Ours", I told him, "are completely free Churches. The original trust deeds simply specify that the buildings are to be used for the worship of God—without any details as to the kind of worship, the form of service, the doctrines to be accepted by minister or congregation".

My Methodist friend admitted that, in that sense, his Church was not a Free Church, that there was what one might call a basic minimum of belief which ministers and members had to accept, and that there was in consequence a kind of "signing on the dotted line" which was necessary before anyone could be awarded a membership certificate. He seemed quite surprised that there existed in this country a body of Churches which did not have anything of the sort, but which allowed for a wide variation in belief and in form of service. I fear that I horrified him a little when I said that I habitually used readings from books other than the Bible; he thought all readings in Church should be from the Bible, and preferably from the Authorized Version.

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I do not know if all Unitarian ministers would agree with me, but for me, at any rate, it is because I am allowed the freedom to say what I like in the manner that seems best to me that I value my position so much. I know, in my heart, that if I were forced to accept the limitations accepted by my Methodist friend I should feel inevitably confined and bound. I know that if I were compelled to confine what I said, week by week, to a specified body of agreed doctrine, that I should find it very difficult to produce a worth-while address.

The fact that a congregation is prepared to listen sometimes to a sermon with which it does not wholly agree provides the minister with a source of strength, since it means that he does not have to trim his sails, that he has not to say to himself: "Don't touch that subject; it's dangerous; it might upset someone". It enables him to deal with matters of the world in which we live; it enables him to talk about the colour bar or the hydrogen bomb, or threats of war. This does not mean that there are not occasions when the eternal verities must be discussed; but it means that there is room within a free church for both sides of the approach—the divine emphasis and the human emphasis, the love of God and the love of Man. It is useless trying to develop an outlook which worships the Power behind existence without realizing that that Power is also *within* existence, and if it seems that we sometimes stress one side of that question and sometimes another, that is only an appearance; the reality is that we are stressing a double message, the two sides of a coin, and that only the whole coin, with both sides, is of real and permanent value.

Disagreements on detail need not worry us. A phrase in one of the prayers at the General Assembly Service in Birmingham last April is a phrase which we should all remember: "Though we may disagree, let us not be disagreeable". As I glance back over my first five years in Sussex, I feel that, though there have, inevitably, been occasions of disagreement, there have been no moments of disagreeableness.

## RELIGION AND HUMAN NEED

By E. W. Martin

MANY people are aware of the deep connection between modern psychology and the religious impulse; and Dr. W. L. Carrington has written in *Psychology, Religion and Human Need* (Epworth Press, 30s.), what is a reliable guide for laymen, ministers, doctors and teachers who wish to endow their lives with an active Christian purpose by helping those who stand in need of it.

Dr. Carrington is more than a professional psychiatrist: he is also a man who does pastoral work and uses his gifts as fully as he can contrive. His book is divided into four parts: the first concerned with the resources needed by layman and minister to combat the stress of modern life as manifested in so many people now, the second with personal and educational aspects which may be concerned with bringing people to a knowledge of prayer, offering some sex education before and after marriage, and of giving to those seeking it a power to pass on their knowledge in a telling way.

The third and fourth sections are of much value because they form a kind of plan which is a Christian response to the problem of healing. The Christian conscience cannot be shut off from this question of healing; and Dr. Carrington offers good advice to minister and layman. He says the Church's part in healing may be carried out in three ways: The provision of a health-promoting spiritual environment through the fellowship of congregations; priestly healing through prayer groups, and pastoral healing in which clergy and layman may work.

Dr. Carrington is an Australian, but the general purpose of his book is to influence Christians anywhere. The "counselling" he proposes is based on the fact that not one of us is entirely self-sufficient. We all need help at times, and Christians everywhere are trying to do what they can to alleviate suffering. "The whole aim of Pastoral Counselling is to create a personal relationship of such quality that the client will feel able to unburden his pent-up emotions, and let go his deeply buried psychic defences."

Anxiety, loneliness, grief, alcoholism, conflicts arising from many causes, all require knowledge and care if they are to be dealt with; and if those they assail can be brought closer to God and to self-knowledge then a knowledge of psychological techniques, an understanding of mental illness and of the physical symptoms involved, are necessary.

Not everyone will agree with the suppositions in the last section of this work, where it is alleged that every Christian is an evangelist. It would be wiser, perhaps, to say that every religious person is naturally concerned about his neighbour and will do what he can to help him. A book of this nature does suggest how widespread neurotic disturbance is in modern society, and it opens up a wide field of work for the layman or the minister.

## EXTRACTS

### The "Gloomy" Dean — And Unitarians

February 5, 1934. Dining with the Brotherhood I found that Herbert Henson was annoyed with me for approving of the invitation to a Unitarian to preach in Liverpool Cathedral. I have never read better sermons than those of J. H. Thom, a Unitarian divine, and Martineau's books are of great apologetic value. I have never found much to differ from in my talks with Jack, though he goes too far, in my opinion, with Luby about "the historical" Christ. Surely there are many subjects on which an Anglican congregation might profit by sitting under a devout and thoughtful Unitarian, or a Quaker. I am all in favour of trying to close schism if it can be done without sacrifice of principle. I think an earlier Henson would have agreed with me. Mr. Redfern, the minister to whom the invitation was sent, came to see me; we talked for half an hour.

Dean Inge, *Diary of a Dean*.

### Another Philosopher — and Unitarians

"[A Unitarian chapel in Boston, Mass., where] good people in their Sunday clothes, so demure, so conscious of one another, not wending in the least to pray or be prayed for . . . (came) to hear a sermon like the leading article in some superior newspaper, calculated to confirm the conviction already in them that their bourgeois virtues were quite sufficient and that perhaps in time poor backward races and nations might be led to emulate them."

Satchana, *Perseus and Plume*.

## CORRESPONDENCE

Letters should be addressed to the Editor, "The Inquirer," 14 Gordon Square, London, W.C.1. They should not in general exceed three to four hundred words in length.

### "The Divided Inheritance"

Sir,—Humanists don't believe in God. How then can they worship? A well-known Unitarian humanist recently informed me that he saw the personality of man reflected in the Universe. Did he not, then, worship man? He admitted that that was probably what it amounted to. "Glory to man in the highest, for man is the master of things"! Back we go, it seems, to the eighteenth century.

Any attempt to devise a form of service acceptable to both Christians and Humanists would be disastrous. And how could we teach Christianity one week in our Sunday schools, and atheism the next? No, sir. Let Humanist and Christian join together in out-of-church activities, let us by all means be members of a single community, but churches and Sunday schools must remain separate. Only thus can we maintain an undiluted religion.—Yours,

Manchester College, Oxford.

Colin Wright.

Sir,—I was amazed and incredulous at Mr. Tom Wardle's suggestion that Unitarians should amend their beliefs in order to accommodate Atheists. Do we have to go berserk over the "Empty Churches" problem?

I have a particular interest in Mr. Wardle's allegation that "The number of non-believers is bound, inevitably, to increase." For, as a former Atheist, I am not entirely ignorant of the state of affairs amongst organized unbelievers . . . and the fact is that the staggering losses suffered by such bodies as the National Secular Society make the present condition of Unitarianism look, by comparison, like a nation-wide surge of revival. The old, militant Atheism of Bradlaugh, Foote, and Cohen is on its beam-ends, as Secularists themselves have been forced to admit. As for the Agnostics, their plight is less serious, but even so their numbers have seen a marked decline, as any member of the R.F.A. would agree.

Seriously, I do not think we should worry overmuch about filling our pews with the remnants of Victorian Atheism.

The policy of the Unitarian Movement should be to emphasize the sheer futility of Atheism, not to accord it an undeserved dignity by making concessions where no concessions are needed.

Atheism is on its way out—and we should be speeding its departure, not prolonging its life by giving it free board and lodging within our own citadel.—Yours,

Chigwell Row, Essex.

Brian Wood.

### "Simplex"

Sir,—It was a great comfort to one of our professional ministers, as it probably was to many, to realize on reading Mrs. Castellano's letter that the great majority of our laity do not take this easy and childish attitude of expecting their ministry to be "saintly-perfect" under all circumstances, however disconcerting, while reserving to themselves the comfortable right to be self-righteous and unthinking.—Yours,

Stalybridge.

Charles H. Bartlett (Rev.).

Sir,—In hastening to answer my journal entry of self-pity your correspondent Mrs. Castellano has entirely misread my entry. I wrote, "Children of the same even learn to live with the uncertainties of life", and went on to detail the ministerial duties which so often postpone or cancel the normal delights of family life. I made no complaint whatever for myself, and merely ended with the hope that our children—through all that is unexpected—will catch the sense of religion that no words can track.

I am often deeply aware of the willing co-operation of my wife and my family in maintaining to the varied needs of my congregation, and my entry simply expressed my sense of their ever-ready helpfulness.—Yours,

"Simplex".



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### Change of Address

The Rev. John Gill, 32 Garland Road, Crossacres, Wythenshawe, Manchester, 22.

### Oxford Committee for Famine Relief

On receiving news a few days ago that part of our most recent consignment of clothing had been distributed among the thousands of flood victims as a result of the flooding of the Nak-tong River, scene of the Pusan bridge-head during the Korean war, the Oxford Committee for Famine Relief immediately cabled an emergency grant of £250. A reply cable has now been received, accepting the grant, which will be used for the purchase and distribution of cooking utensils, etc. The Feeding Centres in the Pusan and Taejeu areas, which the Committee also supports, are being used for the feeding of some of the flood victims.

### THE INQUIRER

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## NEWS REVIEW

**Eyes:** A reader submits the following corrections:

The morality figure was 259 (not 30). The Downing Minister was Thomas Stanley. Bradwell (1695) and Hocklow (1696) were founded by Bagshaw, "The Apostle of the Peak".

**Balmain, Co. Down:** In this 18th-century Meeting House, deep in the heart of rural County Down, electric light has for the first time been installed. At a special service on Sunday evening, September 8, the lights were switched on by Mrs. J. L. O. Andrews, wife of the Minister of Health for Northern Ireland. The Moderator of the Non-Subscribing Presbyterian Church of Ireland, the Right Rev. C. M. Kelly, dedicated the lights to the service of God, and also delivered the address. The service was conducted by the Minister, the Rev. I. Chandler. A congregation including visitors from many districts completely filled the Church, and the offertory, towards the cost of installation, amounted to £187.

## FAITH AND REASON

**P**ERHAPS the plight of modern man is no more adequately described than in the trite phrase, "a renewal of faith". Modern man requires what his ancestors possessed. But he is unlikely to find it in their terms. To have faith they had to merge their personal experience with the inner experience of the world in which they lived. Only in that way did they find it. This is the task of modern man. He has come to terms with his inherited beliefs about God and their relationship to the modern environment. It is not an easy task. But then faith was not easy for our ancestors.

Prof. Paul Tillich is a theologian in the Protestant tradition who is trying to make Protestantism live within modern experience. In *Dynamics of Faith* (Allen and Unwin, 9s. 6d.) he discusses primarily the relationship between faith and reason. He does so with all the new illumination that is now to be obtained from current ideas about myth and symbol, and, as frequently with him, he breaks new ground with psychology.

In a comprehensive study, in a book excellent for its range, H. M. Blackman, lecturer at New College, London, summarizes and interprets a modern approach to the Bible. *Biblical Interpretation* (Independent Press, 12s. 6d.) is eminently fair and interpretative from what might be called a cautious liberal point of view.

Dr. E. L. Allen is a well-known contributor to *The Inquirer*, and his *Guidebook to Western Thought* (The English Universities Press, 7s. 6d.) is more than a summary of "Western thought", it is a stimulating selection by a stimulating mind, of the streams of thought which have met in the modern Western predicament. The book is one of the "Teach Yourself Books" series, and it may be recommended to anyone with an interest latent or active in philosophy.

In a *Reporter Finds God* (Longmans, 10s. 6d.) the author, Emily Gardiner Neal, describes how she found God through faith healing.

"Inquirer".

### Morley C. Chancellor

Died September 2, after a long illness, aged 66 years.

By the passing of "Morley", as he was known to all London Unitarians, Highgate Unitarian Church has lost a faithful and a powerful member: his smile, his ready welcome to all, his frequent argument about the right hymn-tune, his stories, his penetrating comments on the latest world event, his naughty thrusts at human pomposity, his deep faith, earnest conviction, willingness to work and refusal to be thanked, all these things, and many more, are tantamount almost to the completion of an era at Highgate, and the radical tradition is the poorer.

As a business man, Morley was chairman of Amalgamated Paints (London) Ltd. His connection with the industry started in 1911 when he joined the firm of C. Chancellor & Co., Ltd., which had been founded by his grandfather and his father, the late Mr. H. G. Chancellor, also a former member of the Highgate Church, a one-time Liberal M.P. and the man responsible for the introduction of "Value" enamel to this country.

For many years he served on the G.A. Council and represented it on the REVD. Committee. In 1946-47 he was president of the Rotary Club of Mincham. He was the hon. treasurer of the International Arbitration League. He was a great lover of music and a gifted pianist, and the REVD. gramophone records of hymn-tunes were recorded by him. Much of his finest work was done behind the scenes—typical of his kindness and generosity.

Morley served his Master with a twinkle and a yarn. He worked very hard. He was good and true. Those who never met him missed a great Unitarian and a deeply religious man.

K.C.T.

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